

TWO-LEVEL GAMES BEYOND THE UNITED STATES: INTERNATIONAL INDEXING IN BRITAIN DURING THE WARS IN AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ AND LIBYA

INTRODUCTION

Britain experienced a minor political crisis shortly before the 2003 Iraq War. US Defense Secretary Rumsfeld told Washington reporters that Prime Minister Tony Blair's domestic difficulties might prevent British troops taking part in the invasion. No matter, Rumsfeld argued. The US could and would proceed alone. It was a throwaway remark. It was also true. But the British media, British parliamentarians and British public opinion reacted badly. Angry newspaper columnists asked why Blair was unnecessarily sacrificing Britain's independence to give the US military support. Rebel MPs demanded he seize the opportunity Rumsfeld offered, to pull Britain out of the 'coalition of the willing' with dignity. Blair would rather have avoided the argument, though it did not ultimately change his policy. Downing Street Communications Director Alastair Campbell expressed private fury at Rumsfeld's "f***-up", concluding "he just didn't get other people's politics at all"¹.

Robert Putnam's "two-level game" model of foreign policy decision making assumes the international and domestic bargaining arenas are linked primarily through the person of the policymaker². It allows for "reverberation", for foreign actors' statements and actions to affect the domestic politics of other states directly³, just as Rumsfeld apparently did, but does not discuss in detail how this practically works. Nor does it consider the possibility that reverberation varies between states. The fact Rumsfeld did such damage to Blair, but Blair

¹ Alastair Campbell and Richard Stott, *The Blair Years: Extracts from the Alastair Campbell Diaries* (London: Arrow Books, 2007), p. 676.

² Andrew Moravcsik, "Introduction: Integrating International and Domestic Theories of International Bargaining" in Peter Evans, Harold Jacobson and Robert Putnam (Eds.), *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 16.

³ Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games", *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (1988), pp. 454-455.

could not conceivably have so damaged Rumsfeld, indicates that some variation may in fact take place. It indicates that US policymakers may enjoy greater access to and potential influence over *foreign domestic* bargaining arenas than counterparts in other states.

This article uses an innovative application of the media studies ‘indexing’ hypothesis to suggest that reverberation matters more beyond the United States, and that US leaders enjoy disproportionate access to foreign domestic bargaining games. Indexing arises when journalists attempt to meet their professional commitments to balance and objectivity by reporting the views of political actors in rough proportion to their perceived ability to influence events⁴. Most indexing studies focus on domestic politics⁵. But the same forces should apply when journalists report on events overseas. If they care about balance and objectivity they should ‘index’ their coverage of international affairs in rough proportion to how powerful they consider statespersons to be. The media in less powerful states should, in other words, pay greater attention to foreign leaders than does the media in more powerful states. In Putnam’s terms, weaker states should experience more reverberation than stronger states. Recent research in the US demonstrates that foreign actors can gain access to domestic media and can influence both public opinion and domestic politics⁶. This article builds on these findings by looking beyond the US.

The following analysis investigates variation in reverberation between the United States and United Kingdom during three recent joint military actions. The first section

⁴ Lance Bennett, “Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States”, *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (1990), p. 106.

⁵ See for example L. Bennett, “Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations”, *op. cit.*, John Zaller and Dennis Chiu, “Government’s Little Helper: US Press Coverage of Foreign Policy Crises, 1945-1991”, *Political Communication*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (1996), pp. 385-405, Scott Althaus, Jill Edy, Robert Entman and Patricia Phalen, “Revising the Indexing Hypothesis: Officials, media and the Libya crisis”, *Political Communication*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (1996), pp. 407-421.

⁶ Danny Hayes and Matt Guardino, *Influence from Abroad: Foreign Voices, the Media and US Public Opinion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), “The Influence of Foreign Voices on US Public Opinion”, *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (2011), pp. 830-850, “Whose Views Made the News? Media Coverage and the March to War in Iraq”, *Political Communication*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (2010), pp. 59-87, Shoon Murray, “Broadening the Debate About War: The Inclusion of Foreign Critics in Media Coverage and its Potential Impact on US Public Opinion”, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (2014), pp. 329-350.

establishes the theoretical relationship between a state's position in the international power hierarchy, journalistic practices and the impact of reverberation upon the two-level game. The second section sets up a three-part case study comparing US and UK media coverage of joint military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. It introduces elements of both cross-time and cross-national comparison, while recognising the unusual nature of the US-UK relationship. The third section presents results which suggest that the indexing effect does have an international dimension resulting in different levels of reverberation between states. Further research will be needed to show if this arises beyond the US-UK case, but in this instance UK newspapers covered US leaders more frequently than US newspapers did UK leaders. The final section highlights how considering the operation of two-level games in states other than the US both improves the theory and highlights a degree of 'boundedness' in US FPA. Putnam quite rightly downplayed reverberation because it is of limited significance in the US. But it takes on much greater significance once we shift our focus to other states, and the variation is important. US leaders are better able to influence foreign domestic bargaining than their counterparts overseas.

POWER, PRESS AND POLITICS

The different rules of domestic games

Putnam's original model bucked the trend amongst International Relations scholars for ignoring domestic, "second-image" explanations in favour of "systemic" accounts of international phenomena⁷. Though he left the formal modelling for later applications⁸,

⁷ Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954) p. 81, *Theory of International Politics* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1979), pp. 79-101.

⁸ Keisuke Iida, "Involuntary Defection in Two-Level Games", *Public Choice*, Vol. 89, No. 3/4 (1996), pp. 283-303, "When and How do Domestic Constraints Matter? Two-Level Games with Uncertainty", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (1993), pp. 403-426, Jongryn Mo, "Domestic Institutions and International Bargaining: The Role of Agent Veto in Two-Level Games", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, No. 4

Putnam nevertheless explained in parsimonious terms why understanding foreign policy requires understanding the international and the domestic arenas simultaneously⁹. Unlike neoclassical realists, who use domestic-level intervening variables to qualify structural explanations¹⁰, Putnam argued that statesmen are also domestic politicians. They have to negotiate internationally while at the same time pursuing domestic ratification for any agreements¹¹. They cannot pursue optimal strategies at either level for fear of triggering serious costs at the other.

In its most basic form, the two-level game model describes how national leaders must secure agreements with foreign counterparts and win domestic approval in real time. It approximates the workings of the US system of government fairly well, though Putnam insisted his account represented an ideal type of potential use elsewhere¹². Subsequent empirical studies highlighted two key variations among non-US states that shape domestic bargaining dynamics. Both fit with Putnam's underlying approach while modifying parts of it. To begin with, different constitutional arrangements affect how influential domestic opposition can be¹³. The US constitution ensures a level of legislative involvement in major foreign policy decisions. Other states have different arrangements¹⁴. Britain's parliament

(1995), pp. 914-924, "The Logic of Two-Level Games with Endogenous Domestic Coalitions", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (1994), pp. 402-422.

⁹ Putnam, *op. cit.*, p. 427.

¹⁰ Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy", *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (1998), pp. 144-172, Steven Lobell, Norrin Ripsman, and Jeffrey Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹¹ Putnam, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 434-436.

¹³ Peter Trumbore, "Public Opinion as a Domestic Constraint in International Negotiations: Two-Level Games in the Anglo-Irish Peace Process", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (1998), p. 545, Ahmer Tarar, "International Bargaining with Two-Sided Domestic Constraints", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (2001), pp. 320-340, Kai Oppermann, "Salience and Sanctions: A Principal-Agent Analysis of Domestic Win-Sets in Two-Level Games: The Case of British European Policy Under the Blair Government", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2008), p. 194.

¹⁴ W. Wagner, D. Peters, and C. Glahn, *Parliamentary War Powers Around the World, 1989-2004: A New Dataset* (Geneva: Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2004).

approved military action in Iraq and Libya but not Afghanistan. It seems subsequently to have secured a (non-legally binding) veto over future major deployments¹⁵.

Secondly, different states have different political structures, which in turn create distinct bargaining dynamics¹⁶. Compared to Putnam's account, the domestic ratification process looks quite different in parliamentary states without a rigid separation between executive and legislative branches of government¹⁷. In the US domestic bargaining involves negotiations *between* the White House and Congress, whereas in the UK the key exchanges take place *within* parliament. There is even variation between parliamentary states. Despite recent fragmentation, Britain's 'first-past-the-post' electoral system still typically produces "elected dictatorship", governments capable of winning House of Commons votes by definition¹⁸. In such a system political leaders spend more time ensuring their party colleagues' support through a combination of discipline and patronage¹⁹ than they do winning over opponents²⁰. In states with more proportional electoral systems, coalitions are the norm. This means bargaining *between* political parties but *within* the government as well as between the government and its legislative opposition. This can lead to inertia and conservatism, but also extremity²¹.

¹⁵ James Strong, "Why Parliament Now Decides on War: Tracing the Growth of the Parliamentary Prerogative Through Syria, Libya and Iraq", *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (2015), pp. 604-622, "Interpreting the Syria Vote: Parliament and British Foreign Policy", *International Affairs*, Vol. 91, No. 5 (2015) pp. 1123-1139.

¹⁶ Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Public Opinion, Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy in Liberal Democracies", *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (1991), pp. 479-512, Ahmer Tarar, "Constituencies and Preferences in International Bargaining", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (2005) p. 383.

¹⁷ Robert Pahre, "Endogenous Domestic Institutions in Two-Level Games and Parliamentary Oversight of the European Union", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (1997), p. 148.

¹⁸ Lord Hailsham, "Elected Dictatorship", *The Listener* (October 1976), pp. 496-500.

¹⁹ John Huber, "The Vote of Confidence in Parliamentary Democracies", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (1996), pp. 269-282, Daniel Diermeir and Timothy Feddersen, "Cohesion in Legislatures and the Vote of Confidence Procedure", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 92, No. 3 (1998), pp. 611-621.

²⁰ Anthony King, "Modes of Executive-Legislative Relations: Great Britain, France and West Germany", *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1976), pp. 705-727.

²¹ Juliet Kaarbo, *Coalition Politics and Cabinet Decision-Making* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), Ryan Beasley and Juliet Kaarbo, "Explaining Extremity in the Foreign Policies of Parliamentary Democracies", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (2014), pp. 729-740, Kai Oppermann and Klaus Brummer, "Patterns of Junior Party Influence on the Foreign Policy of Coalition Governments", *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (2014) pp. 555-571.

Applying the two-level game model to states other than the United States means shaping its stipulations to local circumstances, as these studies have done. Putnam quite fairly claimed his model represented an ideal type capable of local adaptation. That in turn suggests there is merit in highlighting areas where the model's empirical implications vary, especially when that variation is predictable. That is this study's aspiration.

Reverberation

The idea that overseas actors can influence domestic political bargaining games is not new. Nor is it unusual. Putnam referenced earlier work by Peter Gourevitch²². Gourevitch described what he called a "second image reversed" account, highlighting the international influences affecting domestic politics²³. Though he was not primarily concerned with individual actors, Gourevitch's approach did offer a useful early counterpoint to the prevailing structural theories of his day. Stephen Walt, meanwhile, regarded what he called "penetration" as an important factor in alliance politics²⁴. In Walt's analysis policymakers regularly gain access to and influence over foreign domestic bargaining games in the course of alliance-forming and maintenance processes. Though Walt sees penetration as more of a consequence than a cause of the international political dynamics he thinks especially significant, the emphasis he gives it underlines this article's wider point that reverberation matters. Leonard Schoppa took a more active approach to considering how international influences affect domestic politics, and integrated it with the two-level game model. For Schoppa, leaders can (and should) use direct access to foreign domestic arenas as leverage at

²² Putnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 430-433.

²³ Peter Gourevitch, "The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics", *International Organization*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (1978), pp. 881-912.

²⁴ Stephen Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power", *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (1985), pp. 31-32.

the international level²⁵. He advocates using public diplomacy to reshape a bargaining partner's domestic win-set, thus shifting their international-level stance. Andrew Moravscik similarly noted that while "statesmen have more limited means of influencing foreign win-sets than domestic ones", nevertheless "policies aimed at foreign polities are common"²⁶.

This article builds on this work by partly explaining how the extent of reverberation can vary between states for structural reasons. Gourevitch, like Putnam, does not really discuss how and why foreign actors' influence on a state's domestic politics might vary. Schoppa and Moravscik, meanwhile, present it as a consequence of policymaker choice. From this perspective public diplomacy represents one tool among many available to leaders. As with every international-level move a leader makes, public diplomacy can echo damagingly in the domestic arena of the sending state. A message tailored toward winning over the domestic audience of a foreign bargaining partner seems unlikely to appeal to the sender's own constituents. So there are costs associated with directly influencing foreign domestic bargaining games. Walt, presents a more structural angle. Unlike Schoppa, Moravscik and Putnam, he recognizes that leaders enjoy varying levels of influence over foreign domestic politics regardless of their preferences. Unlike Schoppa and Moravscik, he does not think individual actors have much choice over the level of influence they enjoy.

This article's focus on reverberation follows Walt's account of penetration by emphasizing the structural drivers of variation in reverberation. At the same time it approaches the issue from a quite distinct direction. Walt focuses on the macro picture, on the existence of power differentials between states and on the fact of varying levels of domestic penetration. This article highlights a possible causal mechanism underpinning this relationship. That causal mechanism involves the everyday practices of the domestic news

²⁵ Leonard Schoppa, "Two-Level Games and Bargaining Outcomes: Why *Gaiatsu* Succeeds in Japan in Some Cases but Not Others", *International Organization*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (1993), p. 354.

²⁶ Moravscik, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

media, and the access they indirectly provide certain actors to foreign domestic bargaining games.

International indexing

Lance Bennett introduced the concept of “indexing” to the media studies toolkit. Bennett argued that journalists seek to demonstrate their independence by balancing the views of different sources against each other, but also their credibility by focusing their coverage on actors capable of influencing actual events²⁷. Actors journalists consider powerful benefit from the indexing effect, with those perceived as less influential excluded from news coverage²⁸. Indexing usually magnifies the influence of elites. It is not, however, a static process. As the balance of power between actors shifts between issues and events, so too does their representation in media coverage²⁹. Key members of the governing executive naturally dominate news coverage of political matters, since they hold privileged positions in the policy decision-making process³⁰. When authoritative elites challenge the official line, however, journalists report their views prominently³¹. Whether indexing helps or hinders governments consequently varies from issue to issue and case to case.

²⁷ L. Bennett, “Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations”, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

²⁸ Robert Entman and Benjamin Page, “The News Before the Storm: The Iraq War Debate and the Limits to Media Independence”, in Lance Bennett and David Paletz (eds.), *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy in the Gulf War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 97, Lance Bennett, “An Introduction to Journalism Norms and Representations of Politics”, *Political Communication*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (1996), p. 377.

²⁹ Althaus, et al., *op. cit.*, p. 412 Lance Bennett, Regina Lawrence and Steven Livingston, “None Dare Call it Torture: Indexing and the Limits of Press Independence in the Abu Ghraib Scandal”, *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (2007), p. 468.

³⁰ Robert Entman, “Cascading Activation: Contesting the White House's Frame After 9/11”, *Political Communication*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (2003), p. 422, Matthew Baum, “The Iraqi Coalition of the Willing and (Politically) Able: Party Systems, the Press, and Public Influence on Foreign Policy”, *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (2012) p. 444.

³¹ Piers Robinson, “The CNN Effect: Can the News Media Drive Foreign Policy?”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1999) pp. 301-309, Philip Everts and Pierangelo Isernia, *Public Opinion and the International Use of Force* (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 268, Pippa Norris, Montague Kern and Marion Just, *Framing Terrorism: The News Media, the Government and the Public*, (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 297-298, Chaim Kaufmann, “Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War”, *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (2004), p. 44.

Foreign policy analysts, indeed IR scholars in general, traditionally pay little attention to communication issues³². Most FPA studies treat news management and public debate as peripheral to the real business of policy decision-making³³. The same pressures that drive indexing in domestic settings should, however, arise when foreign policy is concerned. Journalists writing about international affairs should still seek to demonstrate credibility and independence, and should still index their coverage as a result. A number of recent studies present evidence supporting exactly this hypothesis, and indicating why it might matter in policymaking terms. Both Hayes and Guardino and Shoon Murray investigate the influence of “voices from abroad” on the domestic politics of foreign policy in the US. Both find that US journalists actively seek out overseas voices when domestic elites agree. Both find that these voices, when they are reported, can exert a broader domestic political influence³⁴. Indexing, in other words, leads to reverberation. Through journalists’ efforts to report the views of the most politically influential actors, foreign voices gain access to domestic political bargaining games. They can, in certain circumstances, translate that access into foreign domestic-level influence.

Both Hayes and Guardino and Murray echoed a number of earlier studies that suggested the US domestic arena does admit foreign voices³⁵. At the same time, they showed only that journalists cite overseas sources to balance to their coverage of domestic elites. Where domestic elites disagree over a foreign policy matter, both predict journalists will lose

³² Jennifer Milliken, “The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods”, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1999), p. 240, Markus Kornprobst, “From Political Judgements to Public Justifications (and Vice Versa): How Communities Generate Reasons Upon Which to Act”, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2014), pp. 194-195.

³³ Joe Hagan, “Domestic Political Explanations in the Analysis of Foreign Policy”, in Laura Neack, Jeanne Hay and Patrick Haney (eds.), *Foreign Policy Analysis: Continuity and Change in its Second Generation* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), pp. 117-144, Mark Webber and Michael Smith, *Foreign Policy in a Transformed World* (Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2002), p. 88, Christopher Hill, *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), p. 277.

³⁴ Hayes and Guardino, *op. cit.*, S. Murray, *op. cit.*

³⁵ Mikhail Alexseev and Lance Bennett, “For Whom the Gates Open: News Reporting and Government Source Patterns in the United States, Great Britain and Russia”, *Political Communication*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (1995), p. 397, Althaus, et. al., *op. cit.*, p. 412, Beverly Horvit, “Global News Agencies and the Pre-War Debate: A Content Analysis”, in Ralph Berenger (ed.), *Global Media go to War: Role of News and Entertainment Media During the 2003 Iraq War*, by Ralph Berenger (Spokane: Marquette Books, 2004), pp. 73-83.

interest in overseas sources. But that is not the only causal mechanism the indexing hypothesis suggests. Power potentially matters, too. Journalists should seek out foreign sources not just to provide balance in times of domestic consensus, but also to reflect foreign leaders' ability to influence events. Two types of influence should matter. Firstly, the influence an actor has over foreign policy decision-making in the journalist's home state. Secondly, the influence they have over the international system as a whole. Like Putnam, Hayes and Guardino and Murray focus on policymaking dynamics at work in the United States. In the US, the key domestic decision-makers are also usually the most influential international actors. But elsewhere that is not the case. In the UK, for example, the Prime Minister exerts the greatest control over foreign policy decision-making, but the most powerful international actor is still the President of the United States. US journalists might only index their coverage to international actors when domestic elites agree, in other words, but journalists elsewhere should look abroad more frequently. Similar discrepancies should occur between pairs of states with different international power capabilities, though the US and UK have a particularly close relationship.

This 'international indexing' hypothesis potentially affects how the two-level game model operates outside the United States because of what it means for reverberation. Putnam did not consider the possibility that reverberation might vary structurally between states. He may not have thought foreign voices had much of a chance to influence domestic political bargains, even if they did gain access to the domestic arena. Similarly, he may not have anticipated that international power differentials might affect domestic bargaining structures in this way. Even if Putnam anticipated the international indexing effect, he may still not have placed great emphasis upon it. Foreign policy analysts generally downplay the media's ability to affect decision-making. But as Hayes and Guardino and Murray show, foreign voices *can* access domestic bargaining games, even in the US, and they *can* affect actual

policymaking³⁶. This can be a direct process, with foreign voices shaping actual decision-making stages. Winston Churchill's famous speech lamenting the establishment of the "iron curtain" offers an example³⁷. It can also be indirect. Policymakers treat media coverage as an indicator of public attitudes and as a potential influence on public opinion, something they generally do care about³⁸.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

This study investigates whether the UK news media cites US foreign policy decision-makers more frequently than the US news media cites UK decision-makers in their coverage of international events involving both states. It aims to suggest how the hypothesised international indexing effect might affect transatlantic relations. It aims furthermore to say something about the significance for the two-level game approach of variations in reverberation among states. It is accordingly designed with both objectives in mind. It employs an across-time comparative structure, covering the conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. This should help show whether the apparent reverberation experienced in the UK at the time of the Iraq invasion derived from the particular circumstances of the conflict or from more structural factors. It also directly compares media coverage in Britain and the United States. This should help show whether levels of reverberation do in fact vary.

³⁶ Hayes and Guardino, *op. cit.*, S. Murray, *op. cit.*

³⁷ Winston Churchill, "The Sinews of Peace", Fulton, Missouri, 5 March 1946. Available at <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1946-1963-elder-statesman/120-the-sinews-of-peace> (retrieved 7 December 2015).

³⁸ Philip Powlick, "The Sources of Public Opinion for American Foreign Policy Officials", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (1995), pp. 433-435, Robert Entman, *Projections of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 21, T. Knecht and M.S. Weatherford, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: The Stages of Presidential Decision-Making", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (2006), pp. 705-727.

Case selection

Naturally an account aimed in part at explaining how domestic foreign policy decision-making dynamics *in* Britain differ from those in the US should focus *on* Britain and the US. There are, however, further good reasons for studying international indexing using a US-UK comparison. To begin with, the two states are quite similar, at least in terms of variables likely to affect reverberation. Both are democracies possessed of vibrant, diverse domestic media environments. Both rank among the sixty-three free media states identified by Freedom House³⁹. Media freedom matters, as unfree media are less likely to treat independence as a virtue and less able to cite sources critical of domestic governments. Britain and the US share a language, along with twenty other free media states. Language barriers can reduce the cross-border communicability of leaders' statements. The two are also allies, sharing a comparable view of the world. They are likely to participate in similar foreign policy initiatives, for similar reasons and at similar times. This makes it less likely that any variation we identify might derive from substantive policy differences. It also links our analysis back to Walt's discussion of penetration, and its significance for alliance cohesion. Alongside Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, Canada and the Republic of Ireland have free media, speak English and are allied to the United States. Only Britain, however, joined the US in all three of the conflicts covered by this study.

There are two main substantive differences between Britain and the US in two-level game terms. To begin with, Britain's usual mode of strong single-party parliamentary government looks quite different to the US system, with its strict separation between branches of state. While Congress theoretically reserves the right to decide when the US takes military action abroad, parliament (also theoretically) has no formal role in such

³⁹ Freedom House, "Freedom of the Press Index" (2014), available: http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-press#.U1jRD_IdXTo (accessed 6 October 2015).

decisions⁴⁰. Parliament's recent acquisition of conventional powers to influence military deployment decisions has changed the British system in the US direction, however, even as US presidents have increasingly found ways to circumvent congressional oversight. A British Prime Minister who commits to military action at the international level still has to navigate a difficult domestic political balancing act to implement what they propose⁴¹. Putnam argues that the specific mechanisms through which the domestic ratification stage of his model operates matter less than the fact some sort of bargaining takes place⁴². Accordingly we can recognize the greater theoretical divergence and practical similarity between US and UK processes (at least as far as military action is concerned), while also bracketing it for now.

Secondly, Britain and the US differ in terms of their place in the international political order. Here, again, there are some similarities. Both possess nuclear weapons. Both hold permanent seats on the UN Security Council as members of the victorious coalition in the Second World War. Other states expect Britain to behave like a "great power"⁴³, a status it sometimes claims for itself, and one the US unambiguously holds. Britain is, at the same time, considerably less materially powerful than the US⁴⁴. Comparing the two makes sense because international power status is the independent variable in the international indexing effect. At the same time, the gap between the US and UK is narrower than the gap between the US and most other comparable states. To an extent, then, this is a "least likely" comparison in George and Bennett's terms⁴⁵. If levels of reverberation vary between the US and the UK, we should expect to see at least as much variation between the US and other

⁴⁰ Rosara Joseph, *The War Prerogative: History, Reform and Constitutional Design*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

⁴¹ Strong, *op. cit.*

⁴² Putnam, *op. cit.*, p. 436.

⁴³ Justin Morris, "How Great is Britain? Power, Responsibility and Britain's Future Global Role", *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (2011), pp. 326-347, Jamie Gaskarth, *British Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), p. 94.

⁴⁴ SIPRI, "Military Expenditure Database", *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* (2013), available: http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database (accessed 23 May 2014).

⁴⁵ Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Design in the Social Sciences* (Boston: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 73-88.

states. Given the forces driving reverberation should be consistent, we should also see a similar effect at work between pairs of similarly mismatched states.

Method

It is sometimes difficult to pinpoint the exact moment when leaders make foreign policy decisions. It becomes even more complicated when trying to compare different decision-making processes between states. If one state makes a decision significantly earlier than another, as the US arguably did when Congress voted President Bush the authority to invade Iraq in October 2002, five months before the House of Commons gave Tony Blair the same, it is difficult to isolate confounding factors that might upset a direct comparison. This study accordingly follows the majority of similar works by focusing on the weeks immediately preceding and following the actual start of three recent military campaigns⁴⁶. It does this in the belief that the actual order to go to war marks a crucial decision moment, an opportunity to reverse even a well-entrenched policy position. Specifically, it analyses US and UK media coverage during three two-week periods centred on 7 October 2001, 19 March 2003 and 19 March 2011, the starting points for the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and for the imposition of the NATO no-fly zone over Libya.

Two newspapers of record, the *Times* of London and the *New York Times*, provide source materials. The two are sufficiently similar to justify their use in a comparative account because they share a broadsheet format and play roughly equivalent roles in domestic media markets. Neither pursues a strong ideological stance. Both explicitly distinguish between news coverage and commentary. Both help lead the national news agenda. Newspaper coverage, in turn, serves as a proxy for media coverage overall. This is again standard

⁴⁶ Craig Murray, Katy Parry, Piers Robinson and Peter Goddard, "Reporting Dissent in Wartime: British Press, the Anti-War Movement, and the 2003 Iraq War", *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (2008), p. 14, Matthew Baum and Tim Groeling, "Shot by the Messenger: Partisan Cues and Public Opinion Regarding National Security and War", *Political Behavior*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (2008), p. 159, Hayes and Guardino, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

practice in studies of media influence during conflict situations. It is theoretically defensible on the grounds that newspapers tend to provide more detail and more source citations per story than television or social media reports. Anything that appears in a newspaper should appear on television or online.

A Lexis Nexis search for articles featuring the keywords ‘Afghanistan’, ‘Iraq’ and ‘Libya’ during the three respective time periods generated a research corpus for this study comprising 1,778 individual texts. The search had downsides. It is difficult to identify where a particular news story appeared in the physical newspaper edition. This is unfortunate, since arguably more prominently-placed coverage can exert greater public influence. At the same time it is a necessary compromise to make the source materials manageable. The article does not intend to comment on how much influence foreign voices actually exerted, only to show where they enjoyed greater access, through the media, to domestic public debates. The issue of placement is therefore less important than the question of whether and how frequently different actors appeared at all.

Two independent coders analysed the research corpus manually, using the software package *Atlas.ti* to record source citations, coded by functional role (e.g. government, civilian, media, elected representative, etc.) and nationality. *Atlas.ti* allows coders to mark up documents on-screen, and enables researchers to generate summary statistics from coded documents without having to manually count the number of individual items coded. This remains a manual approach, in other words, but one that makes use of technology to facilitate data collection. A primary coder assessed all 1,778 documents across the three conflicts and two publications. A secondary coder separately assessed a random sample of documents using a codebook developed by the primary coder. An inter-coder reliability check using

Krippendorff's alpha⁴⁷ found inter-coder agreement scores of 0.73 for source type and 0.97 for source nationality. A content analysis frame is generally considered very highly reliable at agreements levels of 0.90 and above, highly reliable at levels of 0.80 and above and acceptable at levels of 0.66 and above⁴⁸. The results are therefore acceptably reliable for source type and very highly reliable for source nationality.

RESULTS

Summary statistics

Table 1. Summary statistics showing total articles analysed and sources identified.

Conflict	State	Publication	Articles	Sources	Sources per article
Afghanistan	US	New York Times	202	869	4.3
	UK	Times	168	431	2.6
Iraq	US	New York Times	703	2044	2.9
	UK	Times	421	1009	2.4
Libya	US	New York Times	108	404	3.7
	UK	Times	176	318	1.8
Total	US	New York Times	1013	3317	3.3
	UK	Times	765	1758	2.3

Table 1 describes the overall distribution of articles identified by the search process and source citations highlighted by the primary coder. Some differences emerge at this descriptive level. The *New York Times* carried a greater number of relevant articles overall. It also featured a greater number of source citations per article published. This may be evidence of a difference in approach not previously identified, with the *New York Times* featuring more stories than the *Times*, or possibly stories of greater length. This is potentially significant if foreign sources are indeed considered less important than domestic sources in general. The opportunities for their inclusion are greater in longer stories featuring more source citations

⁴⁷ Klaus Krippendorff, "Reliability in Content Analysis: Some Common Misconceptions and Recommendations", *Human Communication Research*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (2004), pp. 411-433.

⁴⁸ Martin Bauer, "Classical Content Analysis", in Martin Bauer and George Gaskell, *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound: A Practical Handbook* (London: Sage, 2000), p. 144.

overall. This difference, in other words, should skew the results away from what we would expect from an international indexing perspective. If the results support this study's hypothesis, we can reasonably infer that they underplay the degree of foreign reverberation in Britain.

The distribution of stories across the three conflicts tells us something about the relative news values each publication held. Over sixty-three per cent of the combined corpus of US and UK articles analysed related to the start of the war in Iraq. Twenty-one per cent covered the invasion of Afghanistan, and sixteen percent the start of air operations against the Gaddafi regime. These combined figures, however, mask variations between US and UK publications. US journalists showed far more interest in Afghanistan than in Libya. Just ten per cent of the total *New York Times* corpus related to the latter conflict, compared to twenty-three per cent of pieces gathered from the *Times*. These figures tell us two things. Firstly, they show that journalists on both sides of the Atlantic found Iraq far more interesting than Afghanistan or Libya. This likely reflects the larger scale of the military campaign in 2003, the fact it involved significant numbers of Western ground troops rather than just air power, and the greater levels of domestic political conflict it provoked. Secondly, they show that British and US journalists did not always agree on which international issues were most interesting. The British press apparently took a far greater interest in Libya than did its US equivalent. This may reflect variations in the attention the two states' leaders paid to each conflict. Britain was more active in pressing for intervention in Libya than the US, for example, with President Obama "leading from behind"⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ Ryan Lizza, "The Consequentialist", *The New Yorker* (2 May 2011).

Source nationality

Table 2 describes in a simplified form the distribution of sources by nationality across the two states for all three conflicts. It also provides mean figures for relative citation frequencies in each publication. For the purpose of this table, the ‘home state’ and ‘ally’ figures relate to coverage of US or UK-based sources, depending on the nationality of the publication. ‘Home state’ citation figures for the *New York Times*, for example, refer to US-based sources. The ‘target’ figures refer to sources based in the state subject to the particular military campaign (e.g. Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya respectively).

Table 2. Summary statistics showing distribution of sources by nationality.

Conflict		Afghanistan		Iraq		Libya		Mean	
Newspaper nationality		US	UK	US	UK	US	UK	US	UK
Publication		NYT	Times	NYT	Times	NYT	Times	NYT	Times
Source nationality	Home state	0.504	0.313	0.692	0.504	0.453	0.274	0.550 ^a	0.364 ^b
	Target	0.133	0.241	0.080	0.099	0.235	0.265	0.149	0.202
	Ally	0.056	0.262	0.058	0.240	0.030	0.237	0.048 ^d	0.246 ^c
	Others	0.306	0.183	0.170	0.157	0.283	0.224	0.253	0.188

Table 2 shows that both the *Times* and the *New York Times* cited ‘home state’ sources more frequently than those from any other state. The effect is more pronounced in the US than in the UK. In fact, ‘home state’ sources formed an absolute majority of all source citations in the *New York Times*. On average US sources made up 55%^a of citations in *New York Times* stories across the period. This figure contrasts with the 36.5%^b of *Times* citations that related to domestic sources.

The relative significance of these figures appears more clearly in Figure 1. Here it is apparent that the US press cited US-based actors considerably more frequently than the UK press cited UK-based actors. The UK press, furthermore, cited US sources significantly more frequently than the US press cited UK sources. While on average US sources made up

24.6%^c of citations in *Times* stories, UK sources comprised just 4.8%^d of citations in the *New York Times*. The transatlantic traffic in newsworthy information apparently flowed only one way.

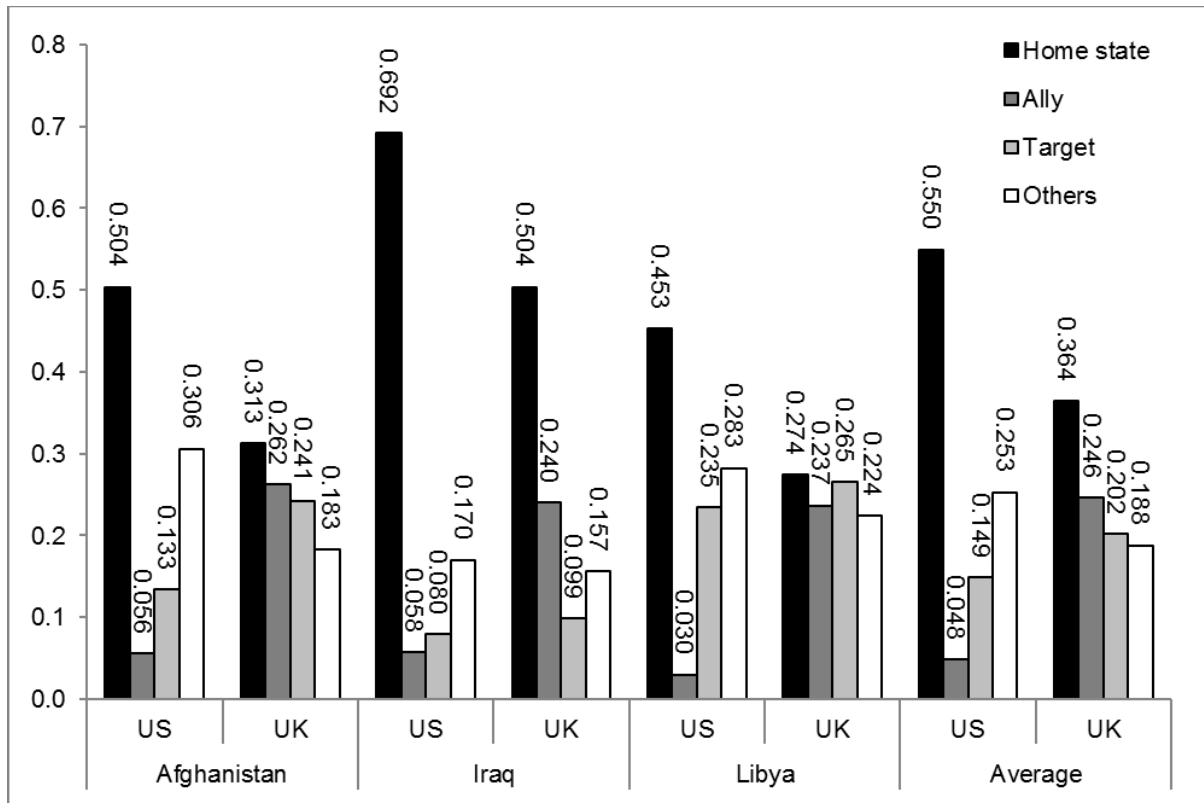


Figure 1. Graphical representation of summary statistics for source nationality.

On one level, such a pattern is to be expected. The UK is smaller than the US, and a less significant player on the international stage. UK Prime Ministers do not necessarily influence US policy decisions. However, the results suggest there is more to it than that. Other than sources drawn from the target state for each conflict, UK sources appeared more frequently in US news coverage than those from any other state. US journalists thought UK actors were worth listening to, just not to the same extent that UK journalists listened to US actors. In other words, these initial results strongly support the international indexing hypothesis. US actors gained access to domestic-level policy debates in Britain much more frequently than UK actors did to US debates.

Two additional points stand out from this initial set of data. Firstly, while both Hayes and Guardino and Murray found the main driver for US journalists citing foreign sources was their desire to present balanced coverage, a comparison of US source citations during these three conflicts suggests something else might be going on. Both studies focused on the Iraq War in particular because of the high levels of domestic elite agreement around President Bush's planned invasion, hypothesizing that this domestic consensus would drive balance-seeking journalists to look abroad. But US journalists actually cited foreign sources more frequently around the start of the more contentious Libyan intervention, having overwhelmingly preferred US sources at the start of the war in Iraq. Similarly, the highly contentious domestic debate in Britain over Iraq did not significantly affect UK journalists' propensity to cite US-based sources. This suggests UK journalists were not primarily looking overseas in order to balance domestic consensus. It suggests instead that they believed US figures were influencing the development of the UK's Iraq policy. They could not ignore what US policymakers said.

Secondly, the international power foreign actors wield is not the only plausible driver of journalists' willingness to cover them. In some instances, foreign actors can directly affect domestic-level decision-making. This can happen when the domestic ratification process depends on UN Security Council Approval, for example, as decisions to use force abroad do in some states⁵⁰. It can also happen when the particular foreign figures involved are already well known to domestic audiences⁵¹. Journalists are more willing to refer to foreign sources they do not need to introduce. Both dynamics could have affected the US media's behaviour during this period. It appears, however, that any such effects were minimal. UN approval came easily in Afghanistan, with slightly more difficulty in Libya. In the case of Iraq it did not come at all. British Prime Minister Tony Blair was well known in the US, especially after

⁵⁰ Wagner, *et. al.*, *op. cit.*

⁵¹ Walt, *op. cit.*, L. Bennett, "An Introduction to Journalism Norms", *op. cit.*, p. 378, S. Murray, *op. cit.*

9/11. David Cameron's profile is much lower. If the prospect of direct foreign influence over US policymaking, or the question of US audiences' familiarity with foreign actors, proved a defining factor in terms of how much attention the US media paid to foreign sources, we would expect fewer foreign source citations during the Libya conflict than during Afghanistan and Iraq. In fact the opposite was the case. This again likely reflects the Obama administration's preference for leading from behind. US journalists *had* to cite foreign sources when writing about Libya because US leaders had too little to say. At the same time, it suggests that the differences observed between the US and UK cannot be explained solely on the basis of the media's knowledge of particular leaders, nor with reference to the specific policies discussed.

Source category

Table 3. Summary statistics showing distribution of sources by category.

Conflict		Afghanistan		Iraq		Libya		Mean	
Newspaper nationality		US	UK	US	UK	US	UK	US	UK
Publication		NYT	Times	NYT	Times	NYT	Times	NYT	Times
Source category	Government	0.564	0.536	0.509	0.553	0.520	0.622	0.531 ^f	0.570 ^e
	Civilian	0.193	0.167	0.200	0.169	0.088	0.098	0.160	0.145
	Media	0.068	0.060	0.138	0.084	0.148	0.038	0.118	0.061
	Representative	0.029	0.072	0.047	0.145 ^g	0.038	0.044	0.038	0.087
	Rebel	0.051	0.088	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.114	0.049	0.067
	Ex-government	0.039	0.035	0.021	0.021	0.035	0.060	0.032	0.039
	NGO	0.023	0.037	0.048	0.018	0.053	0.022	0.041	0.026
	Academic	0.033	0.005	0.037	0.011	0.023	0.000	0.031	0.005

A further possibility is that the US and UK media simply adopt different source-selection strategies. In order to gauge this possibility, Table 3 presents summary statistics showing the distribution of sources according to functional category. The figures look far more similar than they do for citations by nationality. Government sources featured prominently on both sides of the Atlantic. Across the three conflicts, they comprised 57%^e of

Times citations on average, and 53.1%^f of those in the *New York Times*. Much of the difference between these two figures is attributable to the US press practice of citing television coverage rather than speaking to officials directly. This practice was either less common or less commonly acknowledged in the UK. NGOs are more prominent in US coverage in large part because the category includes think tanks, and the US has a wider range of such institutions.

Elected representatives feature more in UK news coverage because of differences in the structure of the political systems in the two states. The US Congress gave authority for military action in October 2002, after which US media (entirely in line with the indexing hypothesis) lost interest in what elected representatives had to say⁵². Britain's parliament gave its consent only the day before the invasion started, hence why 14.5%^g of sources in *Times* coverage of Iraq were MPs. Generally speaking, then, journalists on opposite sides of the Atlantic appear to employ similar source-selection strategies. Where differences arise in the data they are largely explained by dissimilarities between the two political systems. This suggests in turn that the variation seen in the citation of sources by nationality does not relate to fundamental differences in how US and UK journalists work.

Interacting category and nationality

The results presented thus far suggest that UK and US journalists adopt essentially similar source-selection strategies, driven by their professional desire to demonstrate independence and credibility. In line with the international indexing hypothesis, this common approach leads UK journalists to cite non-UK sources more frequently than US journalists cite non-US sources. We will now take an additional analytical step. Since we are interested

⁵² Hayes and Guardino, *Influence from Abroad*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

primarily in *policymakers'* ability to influence foreign domestic bargaining games, we need to gauge the interaction between source nationality and category.

Table 4: Summary statistics showing distribution of *government* sources by nationality, as a proportion of all sources.

Conflict		Afghanistan		Iraq		Libya		Mean	
Newspaper nationality		US	UK	US	UK	US	UK	US	UK
Publication		NYT	Times	NYT	Times	NYT	Times	NYT	Times
Source nationality	Home state	0.319	0.165 ^h	0.343	0.240	0.261	0.184	0.308 ⁱ	0.197
	Target	0.026	0.058	0.025	0.034	0.070	0.079	0.041	0.057
	Ally	0.051	0.191 ^j	0.035	0.175	0.013	0.171	0.033	0.179
	Others	0.168	0.121	0.105	0.101	0.176	0.187	0.150	0.136
Total official citations		0.564	0.535	0.508	0.550	0.520	0.621	0.532	0.569

Table 4 shows the proportion of total *government* source citations in each publication, broken down by source nationality. As expected, both UK and US journalists generally cited domestic officials more frequently than foreign officials. Domestic officials are better placed to influence domestic-level decision-making, so this makes sense. A US journalist writing about US foreign policy will naturally base their coverage on what the White House, State Department and Pentagon say. Over 30%ⁱ of all source citations appearing in US press coverage of the three conflicts derived from the US government. The figures for the *Times*, however, are more complicated. While on average it featured UK official sources more than foreign official sources, the picture is not consistent. UK press coverage of the conflict in Afghanistan featured US official sources (19.1%^j of total citations for the period) more frequently than UK official sources (16.5%^h).

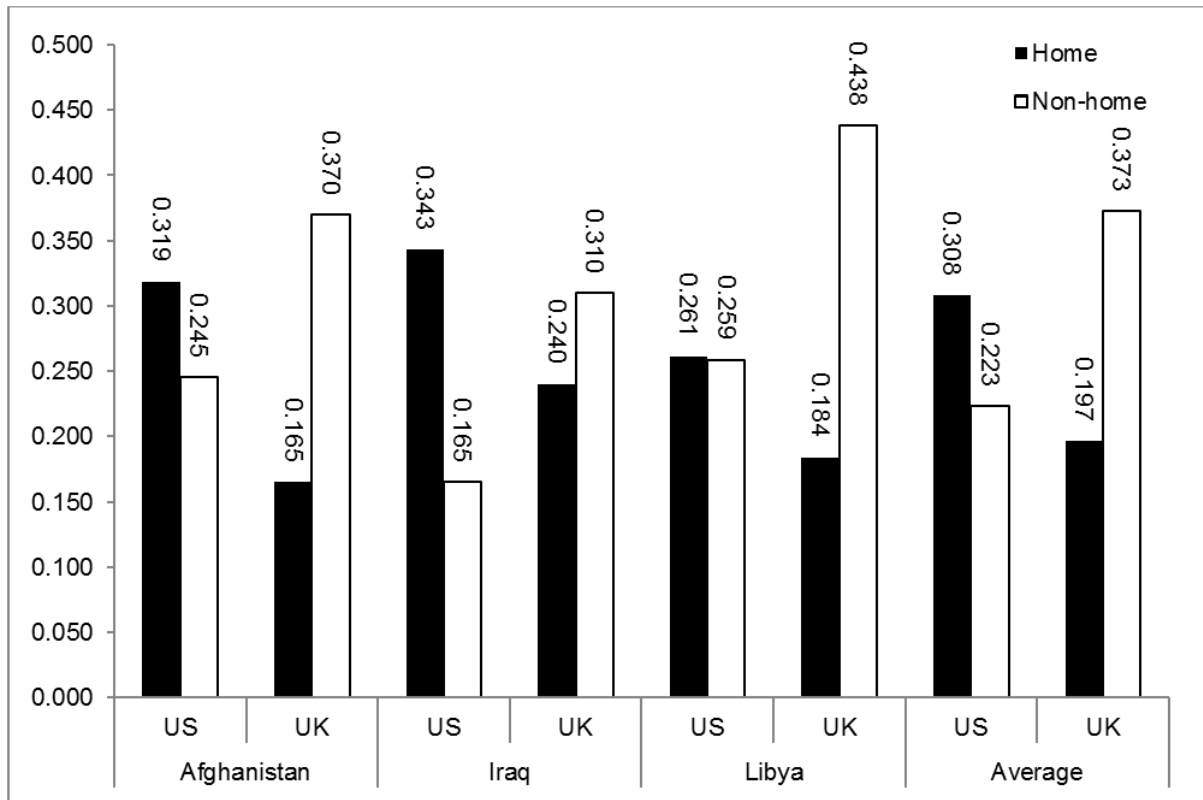


Figure 2. Distribution of government source citations by nationality, home versus non-home state.

Figure 2 highlights the contrast between US and UK coverage more clearly. The *New York Times* cited US official sources more frequently than official sources from all other states combined. While UK official sources appeared more frequently than those of any other single foreign nationality in *Times* coverage, they did not make up an absolute majority of official citations. For all three conflicts, the citation of ‘home’ official sources outweighed that of ‘non-home’ official sources in US coverage. In the UK the opposite was the case.

ANALYSIS

These results show strong support for the international indexing hypothesis. This in turn suggests that reverberation can hold greater significance in states other than the United States. This section considers two related analytical points. Firstly, it looks at whether the results are likely to recur in similar situations, either for future interactions involving the US

and UK or, more ambitiously, those comprised of different pairs of states. This speaks to the question of whether the variation observed reflects an aberration or the norm. Secondly, this section considers how the application of the two-level game model in non-US settings might be revised slightly to take these findings into account.

Aberration or norm

Britain's policies towards Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya were hardly its own. It did not act independently. It did not have the capacity to act independently. As Walt suggests, the fact two states work in partnership can affect the levels of penetration between them⁵³. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to believe the dynamics seen in the cases covered by this study should recur when the US and UK interact in future. These findings may also be generalizable to comparable interactions amongst allies. For one thing, the US and UK played a range of different roles with regard to each other and to the international system as a whole across the three conflicts, while the underlying patterns in the data remained the same. The US lead the way into Afghanistan and Iraq. It was dragged somewhat reluctantly to Libya by Britain and France. Britain was the only significant US ally in 2003. It was one coalition member among many in 2001 and 2011. From an indexing theory perspective, we would expect these different roles to be reflected in UK news coverage, as the relative influence of the US and UK will vary depending on which state is setting the agenda and on the width of the overall coalition of support. Figure 3 sets out the likely outcomes.

⁵³ Walt, *op. cit.*

	US Leads	US Follows
Wide support	UK role downplayed, US leaders feature prominently. (Afghanistan)	UK role downplayed, US leaders feature occasionally. (Libya)
Narrow support	UK role highlighted, US leaders feature prominently. (Iraq)	UK role highlighted, US leaders feature occasionally.

Figure 3. Matrix showing predicted impact of international indexing on UK news coverage depending on conflict type.

If the US leads a broad coalition, as it did during the initial attack on Afghanistan in 2001, indexing should mean the UK's role is downplayed while US leaders are featured prominently. This is indeed what happened. As Table 4 shows, the *Times* cited US officials more frequently than their UK counterparts during the two week period surrounding the start of the campaign against the Taliban. If the US leads a narrow coalition, as it did when invading Iraq, the UK role should be highlighted while US leaders remain prominent. Again the results in Table 4 bear out this prediction, with UK officials gaining greater coverage while US officials lose out. If the US is drawn somewhat reluctantly into a broad coalition, as it was in taking action in Libya, both US and UK leaders should feature less prominently in UK media coverage. This is because neither will appear as the primary force driving the wider policy. The data bear this expectation out to some extent. Obama administration figures gained almost as much coverage during the start of the Libya intervention as their Bush administration predecessors managed in 2003. The scale of British domestic opposition to intervention in Iraq likely explains part of the difference. The underlying trend in UK media coverage towards citing US-based sources probably accounts for the remainder. While the predicted variations do mostly occur, they are fairly small. The real picture is one of stability, with US officials' access to the UK domestic arena via the press vastly exceeding that their UK counterparts enjoy. The consistency between the conflicts, despite their differences, is

such that we can reasonably infer that similar patterns should occur in future cases. This is not an aberration in terms of how the two-level game works in terms of transatlantic relations, in other words. It is the normal state of affairs.

In terms of the implications of these findings for other states, here the key thing to note is that the driving force behind indexing is power⁵⁴. Power is an attribute of all states. They differ not in kind, but in degree. We would not expect the relationships among different pairs of states to mirror exactly that between the US and UK, which are particularly interdependent allies and which share a language. But we can make certain projections on the basis of these findings. The first relates back to the study's 'least likely' comparative design. The power differential between the US and UK is smaller than that between the US and most other states. Since it appears to cause significant variations in terms of the levels of reverberation the two experience, we can project that weaker states than the UK will experience similar or greater levels of US reverberation, all else being equal.

Our second projection is more ambitious and more tentative. Reverberation occurs less frequently in the US than it does in other states because the US is the most powerful player in the international system. Even in the US, however, a degree of international indexing occurs. US journalists think US officials are better placed than officials from any other state to influence world affairs, at least as far as they matter from a US domestic perspective. But they recognize that foreign officials matter on occasion. The US is not unique, in other words. The forces driving foreign source selection in the UK also arise in the US. This implies that the variation reported here between US and UK source selection practices derives from the transatlantic power differential rather than from anything unique to the US-UK context. This in turn implies that international indexing should lead to different levels of reverberation between any unequal pairs of states. The absolute levels will likely be

⁵⁴ L. Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations" *op. cit.*

lower, since the US-UK relationship is unusually strong. There will be variation as a result of other factors, including the specific form of interaction in a given issue area, and language barriers. But power differentials should play an underlying role. Whether this is in fact the case is a question for future empirical work.

Implications for the two-level game model

We have seen that Putnam's model downplays the possibility of variation in the levels of reverberation experienced by different states. We have seen how greater reverberation grants foreign leaders direct access to, and so at least potentially influence over, the domestic ratification process. Within the US, where reverberation is at its least significant, there is probably no need to modify Putnam's formulation to grant it greater prominence. But beyond the US we probably should do more to take it into account.

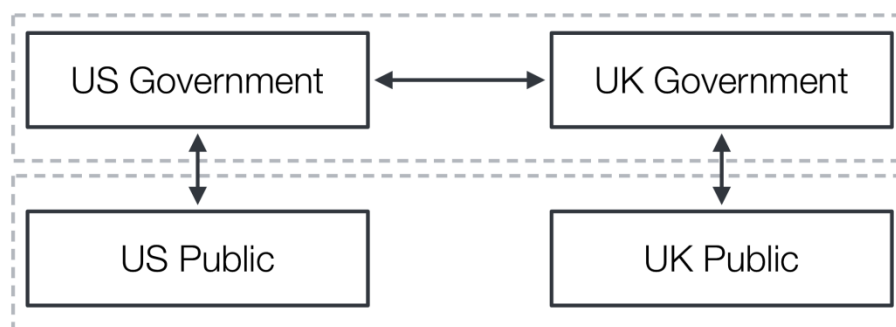


Figure 4: Two-level game model.

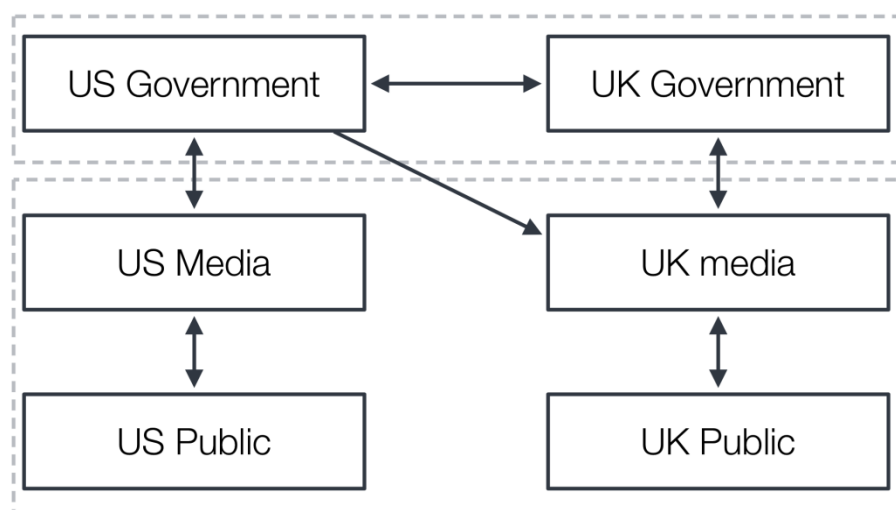


Figure 5: How international indexing distorts the two-level game.

Figure 4 describes the two-level game model as Putnam conceived of it. The two arenas are linked through the person of the policymaker. Governments simultaneously interact with each other in the international arena, and with their respective publics at home. Figure 5 proposes a revised model that takes the impact of international indexing on levels of reverberation between the US and UK into account. It is similar to Moravscik's prominent summary of the theory, albeit with reverberation featuring more as a structural dimension and less as a policymakers' tool⁵⁵. UK leaders still play a two-level game, but their bargaining partner's actions at the international level directly affect the domestic. US leaders, meanwhile, play a *three-level game* at domestic, international and *foreign domestic* levels. They can choose to ignore the fact they influence foreign domestic bargaining directly. But, as Donald Rumsfeld found, that direct influence can have damaging international-level consequences. If the US wants to work with weaker allies, it needs to take their domestic sensibilities into account. Otherwise it risks making international-level agreements, and successfully selling them at home, but undermining its partners' domestic ratification processes. For the two-level game model to capture fully the dynamics confronting leaders of different states, it needs to take more fully into account the possibility that reverberation varies in a reasonably predictable fashion between states.

CONCLUSION

The two-level game model is highly effective in a number of ways. Although it is somewhat US-centric, many of its US-centric points can safely be bracketed when we consider other states. Putnam's US-style account of how domestic ratification follows international agreements can be generalized into an assumption that international activities

⁵⁵ Moravscik, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

have domestic political consequences⁵⁶. Britain's parliament may not have the right to approve international agreements, for example, but it does have the right to throw the government out of office if it cannot stomach something it has done. Every time the British government makes a new agreement without facing significant parliamentary opposition, parliament can be said implicitly to have concurred. This is not exactly how Putnam presents his argument⁵⁷. But it is sufficiently similar that we can treat the difference as one more of substance than of style.

At the international level, meanwhile, different structural constraints such as military and politico-economic alliances only disrupt two-level game bargaining to the extent they themselves involve two-level games. Again we can regard Putnam's focus on bilateral relationships to the exclusion of multilateral interactions and multiple simultaneous bilateral interactions as a necessary simplification of a complex reality. The fact Putnam does not consider how international bargaining situations differ among states reflects the US-centric nature of his approach. It does not, however, render it invalid.

The effect of international indexing on reverberation is a little more problematic. This study finds that leaders of powerful states may be disproportionately able to access domestic political debates in less powerful states, at least when matters of foreign policy are concerned. This causes reverberation to take on greater significance beyond the United States. This in turn raises implications for how the US itself (and potentially any relatively powerful state dealing with weaker counterparts) makes foreign policy, since it brings them influence over foreign domestic bargaining games *whether or not they seek it out*. It is a structural pattern underpinned by the processes by which journalists select news sources. It is driven by their professional preference for balanced coverage based on the statements of influential sources. It should arise regardless of individual actions or the specifics details of

⁵⁶ Putnam, *op. cit.*, p. 434.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 436.

particular policies, which in turn is why the results of this study look similar across the three conflicts covered. The findings presented here relate specifically to the UK in its interactions with the US. Similar dynamics should hypothetically operate wherever states of unequal capabilities interact, though further work is needed to determine if this is in fact the case.

News coverage ensures foreign leaders directly penetrate domestic politics. This occurs even in the US itself. It should be far more pronounced in smaller states, even states that are otherwise quite similar to the US such as the UK. Access does not necessarily translate into policy influence. But it does bring influence over the media and public opinion. It is a necessary if not sufficient condition for foreign actors to shape the behaviour of a state. The discrepancies observed in this study mean that the structure of domestic bargaining games can vary according to the distribution of power at the international level. Whether a state faces direct foreign access to, and so potential influence over, its domestic politics, and whether a state can potentially exert a direct influence over foreign domestic politics, appears to depend at least in part on the relative international positions of bargaining states. It is not just the attributes of the players that vary among states, in other words, but potentially also the rules of the domestic ratification game.

In addition to its specific contributions on both the empirical and conceptual sides, this study has shown the value for Foreign Policy Analysis of recognizing that the US occupies a unique position at the pinnacle of the international political order. Putnam intended that his model should apply universally, and it has been applied fruitfully across a range of cases⁵⁸. He nevertheless, and likely unintentionally, downplayed to some extent the significance of factors that matter less in the US than they do elsewhere. International indexing should in theory cause varying levels of reverberation between pairs of unequally powerful states. This article has presented some empirical evidence supporting this

⁵⁸ See several of the chapters in Peter Evans, Harold Jacobson and Robert Putnam (Eds.) *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

hypothesis in the particular case of US-UK military co-operation. For the US there are no more powerful states, so in Putnam's model reverberation looks like a constant presence. Putnam's 'boundedness' on this count makes his model more parsimonious. But it also makes it less effective, even for studying the US. US leaders bargain domestically in line with Putnam's assumptions. But they also influence foreign domestic arenas directly, more so than leaders elsewhere. They have considerable opportunities but face significant risks as a result. Comparing US and non-US dynamics can reveal both.